



VanDeaver

State Representative

District & Capitol Report - 86th Legislature House District 1 - Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties - June 2020

Around the District. Local hospitals to receive coronavirus medication. Christus Saint Michael Health System and Wadley Regional Medical in Texarkana and Paris Regional Medical Center - North Campus are set to receive an allocation of remdesivir the week of June 22, based upon COVID-19 hospitalization data. These facilities are among 142 hospitals in the state to receive this medication that has had some positive effects in the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Local military base economic impact. The state comptroller's office recently released a study it conducted at the request of the Texas Military Preparedness Commission (TMPC) to analyze the economic impact to the state's economy from its 15 military bases in Texas. The TMPC commissioned this study to ensure it has accurate economic information to prepare for any future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) that the federal government periodically conducts to ensure optimal efficiencies in the country's



billion.

military operations. The study found that the Red River Army Depot in Texarkana has 10,566 direct and indirect jobs with an economic impact of almost \$1.8

Statewide, military bases have a direct or indirect impact on 630,000 jobs and an economic impact of \$124 billion.

Early voting for July runoff elections. Texans can go to the polls between June 29 and July 10, to vote early for the runoff elections from the party primaries held on March 3. The runoff elections were originally scheduled for May 26, but were delayed until July due to the coronavirus pandemic. Election day is Tuesday, July 14, and polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. that day.

Last call for Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP). As your state representative,



I can nominate one student for the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) for the 2020-21 school year.

Students must meet specific requirements to be eligible for nomination and to receive a scholarship. Prior to receiving the scholarship, students must agree to certain conditions including a four-year commitment as a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Merchant Marine or a

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commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States.

Please note that the scholarship becomes a loan if the conditions are not met. The maximum amount of the scholarship is \$10,000 though that amount could change due to legislative appropriations. Here is a link for more information about this program:

<http://www.hhloans.com/index.cfm?ObjectID=8FB593C7-EE1E-7872-00A8808886543AEF>. The TASSP might be a good fit for some families. Interested students should reach out to my chief of staff, Trish Conradt, at trish.conradt@house.texas.gov or call the Capitol office at 512-463-0692, **no later than July 15.**

Around the Capitol. Governor takes additional measures to respond to spiking coronavirus cases. The state of Texas has recently seen a dramatic spike in the number of coronavirus cases and hospitalizations with new daily records set almost every day. On June 25, Governor Greg Abbott announced delays in further reopening the state's businesses and economy to help slow the spread of the virus in order to not overwhelm available hospital capacity to treat COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients. Some businesses that have reopened can continue operating at their 50 percent capacity.



On June 26, the governor ordered restaurants to decrease their dine-in operations from 75 percent capacity down to the previous 50 percent capacity. The governor has ordered all bars, rafting and tubing businesses to again close.

The governor also announced the suspension of all non-essential surgeries in Bexar, Dallas,

Harris and Travis counties. Several major hospitals in these counties have announced that they are close to reaching their maximum capacity of patients in their Intensive Care units as the number of COVID-19 cases spike in these counties. The governor has the authority to either add to or decrease the number of counties affected by the reinstated suspension of non-essential, elective surgeries depending on the circumstances across the state.

Advice on avoiding COVID-19. At the governor's recent press conference, he shared the following information relating to the virus:

An infographic with a dark blue background and a yellow border. At the top left, it says 'COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019'. To the right, in a white box, is the title 'Stay COVID-19 Cautious'. Below this, there is a list of bullet points in white and yellow text. At the bottom, there is a yellow bar with the text 'For updates and more information, visit dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus'. There are also logos for the Texas Department of State Health Services and the Texas Department of State Health Services on the right side.

- Many Texas counties report increasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Hospitals currently have capacity for all who need care.
- Please stay cautious and continue taking these steps to avoid getting and spreading coronavirus.
 - Stay six feet apart
 - Wear a face covering in public and during large gatherings
 - Wash hands often
 - If sick, get tested and stay home
 - Follow Open Texas Checklists
 - Clean often-touched surfaces and objects
- These steps are how we protect each other and get closer to the Texas we know and love.
- For more COVID-19 info and steps to take, visit: dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus

DSHS. The state Department of State Health Services (DSHS) reminds Texans and Texas businesses they should continue to follow the minimum standard health protocols established by [Texas Department of State Health Services](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus) to mitigate the spread of this virus. We need ALL Texans to follow the safety protocols from the state's team of medical experts including:

- Stay home if you are sick or at risk.
- Wash your hands.

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- Social distancing.
- Wear face coverings or masks.

This message is intended not only for vulnerable populations, but all Texans, including younger individuals. While mortality statistics hover around 50 percent for individuals residing and working in congregate settings like long-term care facilities and prisons, it remains a fact that the rest of the Texas population is at risk for contracting the disease and suffering adverse health effects.

Here is a link to the DSHS dashboard for the most current case counts in the state: <https://txdshs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/ed483ecd702b4298ab01e8b9cafc8b83>. There are confirmed cases of the virus in 244 of the state's 254 counties as of June 29.

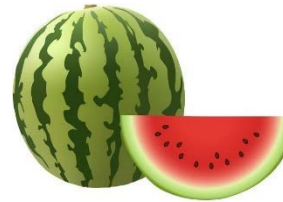
Some local authority reinstated. The governor recently reinstated some authority for local mayors and county judges to issue ordinances requiring that businesses require their customers wear masks while in the business locations. He has also announced that these local officials now have the authority to impose restrictions on outdoor gatherings over 100 people, which is down from the previous threshold of gathers of 500 or more.

TDEM testing sites to issue free masks. The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), in partnership with the Texas Military Department, has begun distributing 3-ply surgical masks to every Texan who undergoes COVID-19 testing at state-run mobile test collection sites. Beginning June 25, each Texan who receives a COVID-19 test at a state-run mobile testing site will be provided with four masks to take home with them. Texans can find a testing site near them by visiting TDEM's [COVID-19 Test Collection Site map](#).

Child care rules. Additionally, the governor has directed the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to enact emergency rules for strict health and safety standards and procedures for child care centers. The emergency rules were adopted on June 25, and cover issues for caregivers, screening of staff, drop-off and pick-up procedures, diapering and dealing with soiled clothing and food preparation. Here is a link to the emergency rules:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-withhhs/providerportal/protective-services/ccl/newemergencyrules-day-care-operations-covid19.pdf>.

Summer meal programs. HHSC reminds parents that **Summer Meal Programs** ensure



kids have access to no cost, healthy meals this summer and return to school ready to learn. For more information,

text

FOODTX to 877-877

or visit:

<https://squaremeals.org/Programs/SummerFeedingPrograms/SummerFeedingInteractiveMap.aspx> to find a site.

TWC Funds to Provide Statewide Skills Enhancement for Unemployment Benefit

Recipients. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has allocated funds to offer rapid skills enhancement opportunities to eligible workers in Texas. This new program includes all individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits during COVID-19 and will provide access to virtual skills enhancement opportunities.



Texas has a historic number of UI beneficiaries as a result of COVID-19, which has resulted in an increased need for a range of services to support Texas

businesses and workers, including the need to enhance the skills of unemployed Texans so they can prepare to reconnect to the workforce in valuable opportunities made available by Texas employers. The Commission's latest action in support of the Texas workforce will be implemented through partnerships with two Massive Open Online Course providers at the state level to provide skills enhancement opportunities to hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers in Texas. Through this funding, TWC continues to demonstrate its commitment to addressing the needs of Texans during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you or someone you know is currently receiving unemployment benefits, have registered at Work In Texas at

(<https://www.workintexas.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>), and are interested in signing up for these online courses, send your name, phone number and email address to:

TWC unemployment stats. Since March, TWC has received 3.4 million unemployment claims due to the pandemic's devastating impact on the state's economy. To date, TWC has paid out \$14.1 billion in claims with \$9 billion from the federal relief stimulus acts passed by the US Congress. As of June 9, Texas has borrowed \$510 million from the federal government to help the state pay its unemployment claims.

TWC work search requirement reinstated. Beginning July 6, Texans receiving unemployment benefits must do at least three work search activities each week to continue

receiving benefits. Here is a link to guidelines the TWC requirements: <https://www.twc.texas.gov/unemploymentbenefits-work-search-guidelines>.

All work search requirements can be fulfilled by on line search engines and submitted to the TWC. Self-employed individuals must show that they are trying to reopen their businesses.



Local workforce solution offices are starting to hold virtual job fairs; here is a link to the Workforce Solutions of Northeast Texas: <https://www.netxworkforce.org/>.

Social media. Please follow me on both my Facebook and Twitter accounts!

My office is here to help. I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please know that my staff and I are here to help you however we can. Though my staff are working remotely, please call the District office at 903-628-0361 or Capitol at 512463-0692 if there is anything you think we can do to help you.